

Caregiver Connection

January 2009

A monthly publication for Washington state foster and adoptive families and relative caregivers



Message from Cheryl

As I depart Children's Administration, I want to take this opportunity to recognize the contribution foster parents, relative caregivers and adoptive parents make to Washington's child welfare system.

It takes a special kind of person to open their home and their heart to a child. You provide a safe and loving home to children who have been dealt a difficult hand and need a secure environment in which to regroup and move forward.

Together I think we've made a good team, by working towards real solutions that benefit children and families. The most recent foster youth survey reflects how much adolescents appreciate their caregivers. Children also tell us they want a permanent home, and this year we are on pace to finalize a record number of adoptions.

Thank you all for the contribution you make to our child welfare system. It's been a pleasure knowing and working with you on behalf of Washington's children.

Sincerely,

Cheryl Stephani

Regional Foster Parent Representatives

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Twice monthly sibling visits

Sibling relationships often last a lifetime. When brothers and sisters are separated in out-of-home placements, it is important to keep them connected for several reasons.

Regular sibling contact:

- maintains a sense of consistency in the child's life,
- helps children maintain more emotional stability when living with or visiting their siblings, and
- builds on a child's emotional stability which supports stability in their placement and in school.

State law requires Children's Administration to coordinate twice

monthly visits for siblings. Foster parents and relative caregivers who choose to facilitate those visits will be reimbursed for mileage, and for the activities purchased (food, sporting events, etc.) up to \$7.50 per child/per visit and will be required to attach receipts from the activity to receive a reimbursement. The caregiver will be reimbursed up to 2 sibling visits each month.

If you're interested in providing this service, or for more information, please contact your social worker. On behalf of Children's Administration, thank you for all you do for children.

Foster Parenting

You can too.

Meet the Ryan family

At one time, Lisa and Mike Ryan had nieces and nephews who needed help and the Ryan family took them in. In the years since, helping – whether within her extended family, within her community, or especially with foster parents and foster children – has become a way of life for Lisa Ryan.

Lisa, 52 is the latest recipient of the Healthy Tomorrow Award from the Kitsap Sun & the Kitsap Credit Union. The award honors individuals and organizations whose contributions significantly improve quality of life, and helps develop a vibrant, healthy future for the community.

Lisa and Mike were full-time foster parents for 12 years. Though Lisa and Mike are not currently fostering full-time, they now provide relief for other parents. “Respite foster parents” like Lisa take children into their homes for the weekend while the full-time foster parents get a short break. In addition to having two children of their own, (one was a foster child she and Mike adopted), The Ryans also have foster kids staying in their home about once or twice per month.

Lisa’s care and attention hasn’t been focused just directly on kids. She also helps train prospective foster parents on working with the foster care system, dealing with the emotions, and even how to create scrapbooks for their children. She also shares her phone number and personal email address to the parents she trains, because she understands what a big undertaking becoming a foster parent can be. “It’s a scary proposition,” Lisa said. “These are people who could call me in the middle of the night.” Though Lisa said she knows foster care isn’t for everyone, she encourages people to seriously consider if it could be right for them. Lisa says many people think they’re too busy to work with foster kids, but even helping out as a respite parent is an important and valuable service in helping meet the needs of children and foster families.

You can too.



Senior projects!

Do you have a high school senior in your care that may need guidance with their Senior Project or “Culminating Project”?

One of the requirements for high school completion is the “Culminating Project”. This is a final project, usually completed during the senior year. The project focuses on an area of interest of the youth and requires supporting research, a written product, and an oral presentation.

Several youth in Washington State have successfully used the college search application process as their “Culminating Project”. This can be a very productive way to encourage youth to investigate and complete a useful project and move them one step closer to post-secondary education.

Please share this information with the high school senior in your care or with other foster parents who have seniors living with them. This topic may be helpful to youth who are struggling with the graduation requirements or getting started on the “Culminating Project”.

For more information contact your student’s school counselor or school advisor.

Statewide quarterly consultation meeting and opportunity for foster parents to be heard!

The purpose of the quarterly statewide consultation meeting is to improve communication between foster parents and Children’s Administration. Meetings focus on recruitment and retention of foster homes, effective foster parent training and other related issues.

Please take the opportunity to be heard – your input is important! Attending your regional quarterly meeting allows you to provide input to the regional foster parent representative who presents at the quarterly statewide meeting. Please contact your regional representatives for more information or contact:

Michael Luque MSW
Foster Care & Kinship Care Program Manager
Children’s Administration
360-902-7986 or email lumi300@dshs.wa.gov

Beth Canfield President, Foster Parent Association of Washington (FPAWS)
800-391-2273 or email bethcanfield@comcast.net.

Early periodic screening, diagnosis and treatment (EPSDT)

Please remember – all children must have their first EPSDT appointment within 30 days of entering out-of-home placement (foster and relative care).

It's that time again – cold and flu season is here and many children are going to the doctor to treat their cold and flu symptoms. It is important to remember going to the doctor for cold and flu symptoms does not meet the requirements of an annual EPSDT examination. Also, more frequent exams are required for infants and toddlers. EPSDT exams require the following:

1. Total health/developmental history (including a complete assessment of physical and mental health)
2. Complete physical exam
3. Immunizations
4. Lab tests, including tests for lead toxicity in blood
5. Health education/counseling
6. Eye exams/other vision tests
7. Dental services (including check ups, cleanings, and preventive work)
8. Hearing services (including diagnosis and treatment, hearing aids)

If you have any questions about EPSDT exams, please contact your social worker or your medical provider.



Post Adoption **Support**

Did You Know?

Adoption Referral and Information Service is conducting a survey for Children's Home Society, a private agency in Washington State. The goal of the survey is to better understand the needs of all families and professionals involved in foster care, adoption or kinship care and the professionals who serve them. The survey is designed for children and adults who were adopted, birthparents, pre-adoptive parents, adoptive parents, foster parents, kinship caregivers and service professionals. The aggregated survey results will be made available by Adoption Referral and Information Service to all who are interested.

If you are interested in the survey, please click on the link below.

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=glhiRC7vtFWUHQBQFzC1wQ_3d_3d

Any questions should be directed to:

Yolanda Comparan, M.S.W.

Adoption Referral & Information Service

425-614-4444 or toll free 1-888-777-1538

www.adoptionreferralservice.com

Book Nook

Do you have any books that you would recommend for adoptive parents? If so, please contact Lonnie Locke by e-mail at lolo300@dshs.wa.gov or 1-800-562-5682. The name of the book, content summary, and author would be helpful.

Regional Contacts

Region 1 – Spokane

Jan Lammers* 509-363-3383
Pam Copeland* 509-363-3379

Region 2 – Yakima

Steve Bergland* 509-225-6500
Carol Cyr 509-225-6531
(Financial Specialist)

Region 3 – Monroe

Steve Foster* 360-805-3032
Linda Richardson* 360-805-3030

Region 4 – Bellevue

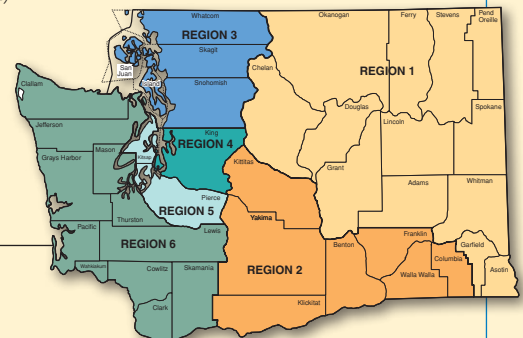
Aaron Washington* 425-590-3072
Jenne Norris 425-590-3069
(Social Worker)

Region 5 – Tacoma

Cindy Anderson* 253-983-6359
Laura Davis* 253-983-6281

Region 6 – Tumwater

Cheryl Barrett* 360-725-6758
Kim Mower* 360-725-6778



Toll free number: 1-800-562-5682

(listen carefully to the recorded message)

* Adoption Support Consultants

FamLink

The future of provider payments – COMING SOON!

In the first quarter of 2009 Children's Administration is implementing a new statewide automated child welfare information system called FamLink. This integrated system will support our Case Management, Provider Management, and Provider Payments.

The service code names/numbers and the timing of Social Services Notices (aka authorizations) will be the primary difference our providers and caregivers will see.

Look for further information about this exciting new system coming soon.

Important numbers to know when you take care of children in out-of-home care

Foster Parent and Caregiver Crisis and Support Line: 1-800-301-1868

ON-GOING AND CRISIS SUPPORTS FOR FOSTER PARENTS

Under contracts with the state, three private agencies are working to build supports for you within the foster care community. Supports include hubs, support groups, and matching new foster parents with veteran foster parents. To get connected:

- If you live in Eastern Washington, the Olympic Peninsula down through Pacific County or from Thurston County to Clark County, call 1-888-794-1794.
- If you live in King County, call 206-605-0664 and in any county from Snohomish County north, call 360-510-7601 or 360-863-6530.
- If you live in Pierce or Kitsap counties, call 253-473-9252.
- If you live in King County, the Friends of Youth CARE program provides short-term counseling, education and support to help you care for your most difficult children. 1-888-263-3457.

Family Help Line: 1-800-932-HOPE or www.parenttrust.org. The Family Help Line is a free, statewide training and referral line for the families of Washington state. Last year, the Family Help Line received more than 5,000 calls and requests for information. Calls can last up to 90 minutes and parents can call as often as needed.

Support for foster parents under investigation for allegations of abuse or neglect: Foster Parent Investigation Retention Support Team (FIRST) 253-219-6782. Monday through Saturday, 8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m., or leave a message and receive a return call within 24 hours.

Foster Parent and Caregiver Crisis and Support Line: 1-800-301-1868

Mental Health Crisis Line Information: The crisis line telephone number for your county or region is available on the DSHS Mental Health Division website at: <http://www.dshs.wa.gov/mentalhealth/crisis.shtml>.

GENERAL FOSTER PARENT INFORMATION FOR THE STATE OF WASHINGTON

FPAWS: Foster Parent Association of Washington State, 1-800-391-CARE (2273) or www.fpaws.org. FPAWS is seeking new members and supporting foster parents in many ways, including referrals to local associations.

Kitsap and Pierce County information about becoming a foster parent or to receive foster parent support: Foster Care Resource Network, 253-473-9252. Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. or leave a message and receive a return call by the next business day.

RESOURCE INFORMATION AVAILABLE STATEWIDE

Get connected to information on resources in your area by calling 211 – a toll free number.

Children's Administration Foster Parent Website:
<http://www.dshs.wa.gov/ca/fosterparents/>

Children's Administration Foster Parent Training Website – Trainings are open to all licensed foster parents, licensed relative caregivers and unlicensed caregivers. For information about foster parent and caregiver training, check out:
<http://www.dshs.wa.gov/ca/fosterparents/training.asp>

CHILDREN'S ADMINISTRATION FOSTER CARE LISTSERV

Join the 400 people who have subscribed to the List Serve
<http://listserv.wa.gov/cgi-bin/wa?SUBED1=fosterparents&&A=1> for updated information on resources for the work you do in caring for children.

Family Planning Services are designed to help avoid unwanted or mistimed pregnancy and are available through your local Community Service Office (CSO). Each CSO has a full time Family Planning Nurse to help provide services to Medicaid eligible clients. There is also a Family Planning hotline number 1-800-770-4334.

Camp to belong

The goal of Camp To Belong is to reunite siblings placed in separate foster homes or other out-of-home care locations. In 2009, Washington Children's Administration and Camp to Belong Washington, will work together to increase the number of siblings placed apart who can attend camp. Please check your monthly Caregiver Connection or the Children's Administration web site <http://www.dshs.wa.gov/ca/fosterparents/> early next year for more information.

The Camp to Belong Washington Committee also would like to solicit your help so more children can have the all-important experience of connecting with one of the most long-lasting relationship in their lives – their brothers and sisters.

Camp to Belong needs your assistance and if you would like to help, please contact foster parents Deb or April, or Bob Partlow with Children's Administration.

- Deb Kennedy: dkennedyfpr@yahoo.com
- April VanGesen: avangesen@fosterfamily-connections.org
- Bob Partlow: pbob300@dshs.wa.gov

Please help us do all we can to make these connections happen for brothers and sisters placed in separate foster homes.

Upcoming events in 2009

The **2009 Statewide Consultation meetings** will be held at the Tacoma DCFS office, located at 1949 South State Street Tacoma, WA 98405 from 1:00 to 4:00 pm, Room 291.

The dates for the 2009 meetings are:

January 13, 2009
April 8, 2009
July 8, 2009
October 7, 2009

17th Annual Children's Justice Conference

April 6-7, 2009
Washington State Convention
and Trade Center
Seattle, Washington